

A STUDY OF THE FEASIBILITY OF REORGANIZATION
OF THE COLLINS-MAXWELL SCHOOL DISTRICTS

An abstract of a Field Report by
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The problem. Since the 1968 study by Drake University, the Department of School Administration, College of Education, and the 1970 survey by Richard Dexter, no action has been taken to reorganize any of the five school districts in East Story County which includes the Collins and Maxwell School Districts. The purpose of this study was to determine the feasibility of a Collins-Maxwell reorganization.

Procedure. A questionnaire was mailed to the board members of the Collins and Maxwell School Districts and an interview was held with their respective superintendents.

Findings. Enrollments are decreasing in the Collins and Maxwell School Districts according to projected enrollments. The curriculums of both districts stress academics and do not offer enough units of credits in order to provide students with a comprehensive education. A majority of the board members indicated that they thought reorganization is needed and that it would benefit the students' possibility of a better education.

Conclusions. Enrollments in the Collins and Maxwell School Districts will continue to decrease. A reorganization of the Collins and Maxwell Schools would create a substantial increase in the amount of units of credits the students could be offered, therefore providing a comprehensive education.

Recommendations. Each district must face the reality of declining enrollment and the effect it will have on its educational program. Reorganization should be considered as a means to improve educational programs and not to cut costs. The Collins and Maxwell School Districts should reorganize in the very near future with consideration given to the possibility of including a third district.

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OF THE COLLINS-MAXWELL SCHOOL DISTRICTS

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by
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

Declining enrollments have created a problem of maintaining an educationally sound program for many of the school districts in the state of Iowa. Such schools are forced to limit their educational programs and combine classes because there are fewer students per class. Since the state bases its financial aid formula on the number of students enrolled, districts experiencing substantial declines in enrollment have to maintain their schools with less money. Failure to obtain necessary financial support for small schools will make it virtually impossible for them to offer a comprehensive educational program. One possible solution to these basic problems would be to reorganize the smaller school districts within a specified geographic area into larger school districts.

In March, 1968, Collins, Colo, and Maxwell School Boards requested Drake University to undertake a survey of their school districts. The Department of School Administration, College of Education at Drake University presented a report to the Collins, Colo, Maxwell and Story County School Boards in June, 1968. The report was a study of enrollment projections, building utilizations, school site considerations, and building needs for the three school districts. The study was done to ascertain the feasibility

of a merger of two or three school districts.

In May, 1970, a field research project by Richard G. Dexter entitled "A Survey of Reorganization Efforts in East Story County School Districts" was conducted. This survey revised the Drake University study and attempted to initiate possible reorganization among Collins, Colo, Maxwell, Nesco, and Nevada School Districts.

On March 23, 1976, the Collins and Maxwell School Boards approved a study to be conducted on a possible merger between the Collins and Maxwell School Districts. As the case in most schools, the Collins and Maxwell School Districts are faced with declining enrollments, higher operating costs, and with the responsibility of providing quality education.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Since the 1968 Study by Drake University, The Department of School Administration, College of Education, and the 1970 survey by Richard Dexter, no action has been taken to reorganize any of the five school districts in East Story County which includes the Collins and Maxwell School Districts. If quality education is to be provided for the students, something must be done immediately before further deterioration of educational programs, buildings, and teacher and student morale takes place. The boards of education of the Collins and Maxwell School districts need to study the

following questions to determine whether or not reorganization would help improve the educational program of the two schools:

1. What effect will continued declining enrollments have on the educational programs in the schools?
2. What are the financial situations of both districts pertaining to assessed valuation, assessed valuation per child, total millage levy, bonded indebtedness, and free bonding capacity?
3. Are the schools in the study providing a comprehensive program now and will they be able to in the near future relative to the expressed needs and interests of the students?
4. Would the reorganization of the two school districts offer the students a comprehensive education and provide for a more efficient educational system?

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

This study will provide the Collins and Maxwell School Districts with data regarding area and population, present and future enrollment figures, financial capabilities, curriculum offerings, transportation needs, and future facilities. This data will provide the boards of education and administrators of both school districts with information to help them make a decision as to whether or not reorganization will alleviate some of the educational deficiencies evident in both districts. This study will also show the possible general organizational and physical structure of the combined districts.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study was limited to two school districts in East Story County; Collins and Maxwell School Districts. The educational programs that were evaluated were limited to those offered to the high school students of each school. An evaluation of the existing facilities was not included in this study. A thorough evaluation of the Collins and Maxwell school facilities can be found in a survey completed by Drake University, June, 1968. There have been only minor physical alterations made in the Collins and Maxwell school structures since the Drake study. A bond issue passed in the Maxwell Community to build a new elementary facility with additions to the shop and music areas are cited.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

A modified form of the restricted or closed type questionnaire was constructed. Letters explaining the nature of the study and the questionnaires were mailed to school board members of the Collins and Maxwell School Districts. In order to validate the questionnaire, a group of Drake University professors in the Department of School Administration evaluated it and made suggestions and recommendations. The results of the questionnaire were tabulated as straight numerical values.

The Superintendents of both school districts were interviewed to collect data relative to their: (1) respective

schools' curriculum offerings, (2) present and projected school enrollments, (3) bus routes time limits and size, and (4) number and condition of buses. A special meeting between the two school boards and their superintendents was held to discuss the above items and to explore possible approaches to meeting existing deficiencies.

Results of the questionnaire will appear in the school newsletter and several will be sent to parents and interested citizens of both school districts. Several meetings with the people of the Collins Community School District and their elected district board members will be held to provide opportunity for a thorough discussion about the possible reorganization. An abbreviated version of this study will be given to each citizen. Two general information meetings consisting of board and community members of the Maxwell Community School District will be held to study various ramifications of the possible school district reorganization.

Enrollment data was collected for the period 1964-1965 school year through the 1975-1976 school year and enrollment data was estimated for the period 1976-1977 school year through the 1980-1981 school year. This enrollment data was obtained from the Iowa Department of Public Instruction micro-fiche-files.

The financial data of both school districts secured from the 1975-1976 Secretary's Annual Report included assessed

valuation, assessed valuation per child, millage levy of all funds and the present bonded indebtedness. The financial data for the proposed reorganized Collins and Maxwell School Districts was computed for all of the above mentioned areas. The free bonding capacity of the proposed district was researched. The computations were done by the investigator according to the guidelines established by the Iowa Department of Public Instruction pamphlet, "Guidelines for Citizens' Advisory Committee". Some of the data of this study is presented through the use of tables.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Observation of national trends gives one an overview of what is presently happening and what possibly could happen in the future to educational systems in the United States. Survival of elementary and secondary educational systems in every state is primarily related to the populations of their specific geographical locations.

One of the most important changes since 1970 in the long standing patterns of population and redistribution in the United States is the fact that metropolitan areas are no longer growing faster than non-metropolitan parts of the nation....The relatively high rate of growth shown by non-metropolitan areas since 1970 represents increases in non-farm areas but does not provide any evidence of a significant return immigration by metropolitan dwellers to form communities of pursuits.¹

Population is primarily based on fertility rates and live births. The following statistics for the years 1973 and 1974 are significant.

In 1974, the total fertility rate in the United States--the births 1,000 women would have in their lifetimes based upon the birth rates occurring in a given calendar year--was estimated to be 1.86. This compares with 1.90 in 1973. The 1974 figure is the lowest level in the history of the United States.²

¹George E. Delury, ed., The World Almanac and Book of Facts (New York: Newspaper Enterprise Association, Inc., 1976), p. 201.

²Ibid.

It is rather obvious that if the above mentioned population trend based on fertility and birth rate continues in the United States, most all states will experience the effect of declining enrollments. Declining enrollments in metropolitan as well as farm communities could have an effect on the quality, efficiency, and economy of their educational programs.

In the state of Iowa when a school district fails to meet the basic principles of providing a comprehensive educational program at acceptable levels of quality, efficiency, and economy, it is encouraged by the State of Iowa Code, Chapter 275.1, to reorganize.

It is hereby declared to be the policy of the state to encourage the reorganization of school districts into such units as are necessary, economical, and efficient and which will insure an equal opportunity to all children of the state.¹

The above mentioned legislation brought about a statewide reorganization of school districts in 1953. On July 1, 1967, legislation passed by the 61st Iowa General Assembly, required all areas of the state to become parts of legally constituted school districts maintaining a high school. This act eliminated 579 school districts.² Since the 1967

¹Larry Bartlett, ed., School Laws of Iowa (Des Moines: State of Iowa, 1976), p. 241.

²Ellis G. Hanson and Ralph D. Purdy, Great Plains School District Organization, A Design for Educational Organization in Iowa (Des Moines: State of Iowa, June, 1968), pp. 48-49.

elimination of the non-operating school districts, Iowa Governor Robert D. Ray's Educational Advisory Committee in 1971 recommended that the number of school districts be "drastically reduced" to improve efficiency and to cut costs.¹ The governor proposed a school financing plan formula funding school districts by multiplying the state average cost per student by the number of students in the school. This formula is presently being used in financing Iowa's schools.

This plan is to make the local property taxpayer, instead of the state school aid, pay the burden of the cost of a district...our plan will have some effect on the inefficient, high cost districts, and, that in itself will provide some re-organization....but it will be on a basis less than a forced basis....²

Governor Ray's financing plan is working. Many of Iowa's school districts experiencing declining enrollments are having to operate with less money which is inhibiting their educational programs, therefore encouraging reorganization. It is germane to this study to discuss enrollments, school finances, educational programs, transportation, and school facilities in relation to reorganization.

¹James Flansburg, "Ray Shelves School Study on Districts", Des Moines Register, February 20, 1971, p. 1, col. 4.

²Ibid.

ENROLLMENTS

Enrollment is the basis for all educational programming. Pupil population of past, present, and projected enrollment trends should be carefully considered as an initial part of reorganization. The following data about Iowa birth rate trends and their effects on enrollments has been documented in a report by Wayne P. Truesdall.

National and Iowa rates have dropped drastically since the 19 high years, 1946-1964. The smallest number of births were in the three most recent years 1972, 1973 and 1974. They will produce 35 percent less (sic) students in 1977-1979 than the seniors graduating those years. During the 3 years 1977-1979, seniors will come from total births of 191,932 and kindergartens from total births of 121,019, a drop of 37% or 70,912. Considering a survival ratio in public schools of 86%, the loss in students could be 61,000 in three years. In 1984-1985 one could anticipate 496,000 public students in Iowa compared to a high of 659,888 in 1969-70. This is a drop of 25%. Thus the average Iowa school can prepare for 25-35 percent less (sic) students as smaller birth rates continue to enter school to replace larger graduating classes.¹

It is apparent that the declining enrollments will continue into the mid 1980's. Seventy-two percent of the 449 school districts are experiencing declining enrollments because of the lower birth rate which is 1.9 births per one thousand women.²

¹Wayne P. Truesdall, "A Survey of Probable Enrollment Trends, Existing Building Facilities, Further Facility Needs and Financial Capacity of the Colo Community School District" (Cedar Falls, Iowa: University of Northern Iowa, March, 1975), p. 10.

²Ibid., p. 9.

Smaller school districts in Ohio, faced with declining enrollments and with fewer than 400 students in high school tend to have: (1) first-year teachers, (2) teachers teaching outside their fields, (3) lower salaries, (4) greater teacher turn over, (5) fewer curricular offerings, and (6) limited or no vocational offerings with higher percentage of pupils enrolled in academic courses. While in contrast, the larger high schools with enrollments of over 1,000 students have: (1) teachers with advanced degrees, (2) teachers teaching in specialized fields, (3) higher salaries, (4) lower teacher turnover, (5) advanced course offerings, and (6) meaningful vocational training programs with lower percentage of pupils enrolled in academic courses.¹

While the above profile reveals conditions in the Ohio high schools, it underscores the same kinds of problems facing Iowa high schools with enrollments under four hundred students. Many high schools in Iowa are looking for solutions to these problems. Iowa school districts with four hundred or more students in high school should, because of increased financial stability, be able to support a curriculum that will meet the needs and interests of most of their consumers.

¹Ohio's High Schools: A Statistical Profile, Staff Research Report, No. 56, Ohio Legislature Service Commission, January, 1963, p. 5.

SCHOOL FINANCES

Innovations such as individual guided education, team teaching, open classrooms and other educational technology, coupled with declining enrollments and increased state standards, will require a better financial basis if a school system is to provide a comprehensive program. Collective bargaining initiated by teacher organization is also causing a rapid deterioration of general fund monies in many school districts with declining enrollments. This is especially severe in very small districts because the amount of general fund monies available is directly related to the number of students in a school system. All of the above mentioned realities are putting a strain on budgets that have already reached limits beyond their economic resources. The following statement suggests a possible solution to the financial problems confronting small school districts.

The quality of the local educational program of a school district is dependent upon the economic base of the district. School district reorganization is advocated as a means of increasing the economic efficiency of the educational program. This does not necessarily mean a reduction in operating expenditures, but rather, better returns to the taxpayers on their tax dollars.¹

The Iowa Department of Public Instruction made this succinct statement, "Efficiency in services increases to

¹Ohio's High Schools, p. 8.

point as size increases within fixed limits."¹ This means that as the cost increases or continues to rise, pressure for greater operating efficiency increases. This author believes that most people realize that if small schools are to maintain quality education for their students and the schools continue to decrease in enrollments, small schools will be hard pressed to provide comprehensive educational programs.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Society is not static, it is dynamic and continues to change rapidly every year. This rapid change should cause those people responsible for educational programs to be alert to the needs and demands of society. The following statements were made in an Iowa Association of Secondary School Principals' position paper:

American society is in a state of constant change: Old truths are being re-evaluated; new truths are being discovered; careers once thought stable require constant updating; students now need to be prepared for four or five different careers; change has always been an ingredient of an evaluating society....Schools have been created by society for specific purposes: (1) to perpetuate the culture of that society; (2) to prepare young people for constructive life within that society....To implement our second main purpose for the establishment of schools, each young person

¹Ellis G. Hanson, Criteria for Analyzing District Feasibilities (Des Moines, Iowa: Iowa State Department of Public Instruction, 1967), p. 1.

must have the opportunity to prepare for a vocation or to elect a specific course which may be an entry course into a vocation.¹

There has been a cultural lag in school systems but this is slowly beginning to change and is essential if students today are to cope with the changes of society. There seems to be more stress on vocational areas now than there was in past years. Many high school students are graduating with academic skills that are not practical to most vocations which the students may want to enter. With increased costs of programs and lack of funds to pay experienced teachers, most small school districts usually give the students the basics in academic courses to meet state requirements and neglect student vocational interests. This neglect is brought about by financial necessity and not because of a misunderstanding of student needs.

The following assumptions were made about school programs in a 1970 Department of Public Instruction's facility report to the Collins and Maxwell school boards.

In any democratic society the development of interests, appreciation, ideas and attitudes are essential in the planning of a sound educational program. The following principles should serve as guides in securing balance in the total educational program. (1) The educational program should reflect the school community's philosophy and a knowledge of the needs of its students. (2) The school's program should be sufficiently broad to

¹Iowa Association of Secondary School Principals' Position Paper, "Great Plains Organization Study," Hawkeye School Master, March, 1969, pp. 25-27.

serve both the general and specialized needs of its students. It will therefore provide variety in the training experiency through its classrooms, laboratories, shops, activities, and guidance services. (3) The planning of guiding policies and the design of the school's educational program should make provisions for cooperative participation of citizens, faculty members and students. (4) The program should be designed to encourage all educable youth in its community to complete a high school program. This objective will necessitate provisions for students of different talents, aptitudes and future interests. (5) There should be continuous and planned provisions for appraisal, evaluation and¹ needed improvements of the educational programs.

In order to have an adequate program, the Department of Public Instruction defined its minimum educational requirements in a policy statement of November, 1963. These were:

High School Program Experiences (9-12):

A.	English - - - - -	4 yrs.
B.	Business Education, including type-	
	writing - - - - -	4 yrs.
C.	Mathematics - - - - -	4 yrs.
D.	Science, including physics and	
	chemistry - - - - -	4 yrs.
E.	Social Studies, including American	
	History, American problems or econ-	
	omics and sociology - - - - -	4 yrs.
F.	Physical Education - - - - -	4 yrs.
G.	Homemaking - - - - -	3 yrs.
H.	Industrial Arts - - - - -	3 yrs.
I.	Modern Foreign Language - - - - -	3 yrs.
J.	Music - - - - -	2 yrs.
K.	Art - - - - -	1 yr.

¹Gale C. Obrecht, "A Report on the Collins and Maxwell School Districts" (Des Moines, Iowa: Department of Public Instruction, November, 1970), p. 1.

- L. Agricultural Education, Distributive
Education, Trade and Industrial
Education - - - - - 3 or 4 yrs.
sequential offering.¹

The above minimum requirements are basically the same at the present time (1976) with only minor changes. These requirements are reasonable and would offer an adequate academic program.

The following are support services recommended in order to have a comprehensive educational program:

- A. Special Education services:
 - 1. Psychological services
 - 2. Special classes
 - 3. Itinerant teachers
 - 4. Consultation services
- B. Guidance Services
- C. Library
- D. Audio-Visual²
- E. School Health²

"With the acceptance of these standard rules and regulations by the 62nd General Assembly, Iowa presently has the most perspective approval standards of any state in the nation."³ School districts evaluating their educational programs and finding deficiencies according to these standards may consider reorganization as one alternative to providing such programs with maximum efficiency and economy.

¹Hanson and Purdy, pp. 51-52.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

TRANSPORTATION

In the reorganization of any school district, school busing is very important in the minds of many parents because of the time involved in transporting their children to and from the school. The geographic features of the area and the road conditions that comprise the transportation routes should be carefully considered as to time-distance limitations for all students.

The 1975 School Rules of Iowa, Chapter 22.1, suggests the maximum transportation times for school districts.

The riding time, under normal conditions, from the designated stop to the attendance center, or on the return trip, shall not exceed seventy-five minutes for high school students or sixty minutes for elementary students....These limits¹ may be waived upon the request of the parents.

Bus routes must also be as economical as possible according to the 1975 School Rules of Iowa, Chapter 22.1 (1) and 22.1 (2).

Bus routes within the boundaries of transporting districts as well as within designated areas must be as efficient and economical as possible under existing conditions....A route shall provide a load² of at least 75 percent capacity of the bus.

These provisions and requirements are reasonable and

¹Larry Bartlett, ed., School Rules of Iowa (Des Moines, Iowa: Department of Public Instruction, 1976), p. 1.

²Ibid.

do not place an undue burden on most schools, however there is a sparsity factor which could possibly prevent compliance with some of these requirements. If the exceptions are not too extreme, parental approval would probably be forthcoming.

SCHOOL FACILITIES

In order to have an adequate educational program, building facilities play a major part in the excellence or mediocrity of that program. The local school district's philosophy and type of educational program have a bearing on the facilities that are needed. The size of the facility is also governed by the number of students to be served. The following are school site sizes recommended by the Council of Facility Planners:

- a. Elementary Schools: A minimum of ten acres, plus an additional acre for each 100 pupils enrolled.
- b. Junior High Schools: A minimum of twenty acres, plus an additional acre for each 100 pupils enrolled.
- c. Senior High Schools: A minimum of thirty acres, plus an additional acre for each 100 pupils enrolled.¹

Time and experience have proved the value of these recommendations. They have proved to be adequate and acceptable by

¹Susan K. Gwynne, ed., Guide for Planning Educational Facilities (Columbus, Ohio: Council for Educational Facility Planners, 1976), p. F-10.

most administrations.

According to the Council of Facility Planners, the following reasons are offered as to why school sites have increased in size.

It is recognized that recommended school sites have increased over the years. The necessity of larger sites appears to be due to a number of trends such as:

- a. space for outdoor teaching areas: i.e., recreation, physical education, etc.;
- b. single story construction;
- c. consolidation of attendance centers resulting in larger schools, more buses and practices requiring on-site bus loading and unloading; and
- d. parking space for the ever-increasing number of teacher and pupil cars.¹

These suggestions are very general in nature but they do provide one with some guidelines. All of the ideas suggested by the Council of Facility Planners must receive the attention of those persons responsible for providing adequate school sites for various school activities.

Chapter 297.2, School Laws of Iowa, stated there was a ten acre limitation for school sites.

Except as herein after provided, any school district may take and hold so much real estate as may be required for such site, for the location or construction thereon of schoolhouses, and the convenient use thereof, but not exceed ten acres exclusive of public highway.²

¹Gwynne, p. F-10.

²Bartlett, p. 22.

This law has been repealed and there now is a thirty-acre limitation for school sites.

Chapter 2 has reviewed the following topics on school reorganization: (1) national birth rate trends, (2) enrollments, (3) school finances, (4) educational programs, (5) transportation, and (6) school facilities. The investigator believes the above mentioned topics are germane to any study on school reorganization.

Chapter 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter will state the procedures that were used to initiate this study and the instruments used to collect data. There also will be a chronological listing of procedures followed in initiating the process or reorganization between the Collins and Maxwell Community School Districts.

QUESTIONNAIRE

A modified form of the restricted or closed type questionnaire was constructed. Questionnaires were mailed to school board members of the Collins and Maxwell school districts. In order to validate the questionnaire, a group of Drake University professors in the Department of School Administration evaluated it and made suggestions and recommendations. The results of the questionnaire were presented in descriptive form using straight numerical values. The questionnaire consisting of ten questions was designed to ascertain what the Collins and Maxwell board members feelings were relative to the possibility of reorganization. The questionnaire was a restricted or closed type with a possibility of three responses; yes, no, and undecided. The ten questions were designed to obtain information in the following areas pertaining to reorganization:

1. Whether or not the study should include two schools (Collins and Maxwell) or three schools (Collins, Maxwell, and Colo).
2. Need for reorganization.
3. Educational benefits to students.
4. Board's assessment of citizen's feelings about reorganization.
5. Impetus for reorganization.

During the school year 1975-1976, the Superintendents of both school districts were interviewed by the principal* of Collins School District in order to collect data relative to their: (1) respective school's educational programs and curriculum offerings, (2) present and projected enrollments, (3) bus route time limits and size, and (4) number and condition of buses. A special meeting was held on March 23, 1976, between the two school boards and their superintendents to discuss the above items and to explore possible approaches to meeting existing deficiencies.

Results of the questionnaires appeared in the Collins School Newsletter and several of them were sent to parents and interested citizens of both school districts. Meetings with the people in each of the four director districts of the Collins Community School District were held to provide an opportunity for a thorough discussion about the possible reorganization. An abbreviated version of the study was given to citizens who attended the meetings. Two general

*Investigator of the study.

information meetings consisting of board and community members of the Maxwell Community School District were held to study various ramifications of the possible school district reorganization.

ENROLLMENT AND FINANCIAL DATA

Enrollment data were collected for the period 1964-1965 school year on through the 1975-1976 school year and, enrollment data was estimated for the period 1976-1977 school year through the 1980-1981 school year. The enrollment data were obtained from the Iowa Department of Public Instruction micro-fiche-files.

The financial data of both school districts secured from the 1975-1976 Secretary's Annual Report included assessed valuation, assessed valuation per child, millage levy of all funds, and the present bonded indebtedness. The financial data for the proposed reorganized Collins and Maxwell School Districts were computed for all of the above mentioned areas. The free bonding capacity of the proposed district was researched and cited. All computations were done by the investigator according to the guidelines established by the Iowa Department of Public Instruction pamphlet, "Guidelines for Citizens' Advisory Committee." Most of the data of this study is presented through the use of tables in Chapter 4, Presentation of the Data.

CHRONOLOGICAL REVIEW

The following material will be a chronological view of what procedures were taken in order to initiate reorganization. All information stated was taken from the Collins School Board Secretary's Minutes and/or the Collins School Newsletter.

February 25, 1976, at a special Collins School Board meeting, the board reviewed the budget for the 1976-1977 school year. Their main concern after reviewing the budget was the Collins School District's possible financial condition in the next two or three years. The principal stated he would conduct a study concerning the feasibility of possible reorganization for the Collins School District. He asked the board if they preferred a two- or three-school study. The board stated that a two-school merger would probably have a better chance of passing. The unanimous decision of the board was to consider reorganization with the Maxwell Community School District because Maxwell's bonded indebtedness was lower than other schools that could be involved in reorganization with Collins, the traveling distance was shorter between the two schools, and the compatibility of the Collins and Maxwell students was very good. The Collins Board instructed the principal to start a study.

March 4, 1976, a cover letter with the questionnaire was mailed to all members of both school boards to ascertain their interest in a possible reorganization.

March 23, 1976, there was an informal meeting of the Collins and Maxwell Boards of Education at Collins to discuss the results of the questionnaire and to see if both boards agreed to continue the study of a possible reorganization. Both boards agreed to continue the study.

April 1, 1976, the Collins Community School Newsletter carried an article about the meeting of March 23 and presented the results of the questionnaire. It also stated what information would be collected and its usefulness in helping the Collins and Maxwell Boards make a judgment of their schools' situations. The newsletter also explained that there had been no definite decision made about the reorganization of the Collins and Maxwell School Districts, and any final decision on the matter must be made by a vote of the people in both communities.

April 20, 1976, at the Collins regular board meeting, the principal told the board that the preliminary study of both school districts had been completed and that he had notified the Maxwell superintendent. He recommended that a special meeting of the Collins and Maxwell Boards should be called at which time he could explain the findings of the study. The board agreed to an April 22 meeting at Maxwell.

April 22, 1976, at Maxwell, the boards met in a special session to hear the findings of the preliminary study. The discussion agenda covered the Collins and Maxwell School Districts' situations pertinent to area and population,

enrollments--past, present, and projected--finances, school program and curriculum, transportation and existing facilities, and grade organization. The second topic discussed was the actual petition procedure needed in order to implement the reorganization process. The areas covered were: advisory committees, petition procedure, hearing section, election, board election, assets and liabilities, district lines, and enlargement of a district. The third topic discussed was a possible timetable for the implementation of the reorganization procedures. All of the above mentioned discussion areas were presented by the principal. The Collins and Maxwell School Boards agreed that all the information presented to them pertinent to the schools should be given to the citizens of both communities in public information meetings. The two boards instructed the principal to develop a booklet containing information concerning the facts about the possibility of reorganization.

April 30, 1976, a special board meeting of the joint boards was held at Collins to evaluate the information booklet relative to additions or deletions before publication. The boards agreed that a section on taxes should be included in the information and that the joint boards should include their recommendations on the sharing of liabilities, grade structure, and on the number of directors and how the director districts should be divided. The joint boards agreed that the Collins and Maxwell citizens should share

the bond issue liability of \$700,000 of the Maxwell District. Also, they agreed that the grade organization should be K-4-4-4, and that there should be five directors, four specific director districts and one at large. It was further agreed that the Indian Creek Township boundary dividing the existing school districts, North and South, should be the election boundaries. There should be two directors elected from the East, two directors elected from the West and one director elected at large. All of the above mentioned additions and recommendations were to be added to the public information booklet which was to include a map of the combined districts.

May 17, 1976, at a Collins regular board meeting, the principal informed the board that the information booklets were back from the printers and that he had informed Maxwell's superintendent. He also informed the board that Maxwell decided to have two general information meetings with their community citizens. The investigator recommended that the board have four general information meetings divided up according to the director districts with each board member conducting his own meeting. All directors were to use the general information booklet as their guidelines for their meeting. The investigator of the study was instructed to attend all of the meetings. The board decided to have four general information meetings divided according to director districts and they were as follows: District

One, Jim Newton, May 20, 1976; District Two, Gary Coughenour, May 19, 1976; District Three, Cyril Lengeling, May 24, 1976; District Four, Mike Mullihan, May 22, 1976. The meetings were to be held in the Collins Gym at 8:00 p.m. The date, time and place were to be announced in the Collins Newsletter on May 18, 1976.

May 27, 1976, a special board meeting of the Collins and Maxwell Boards was held at Collins to discuss their citizens' meetings. The main concern of most of the citizens was where the school centers were to be located. The joint boards decided to have a team from the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) do a facilities study of both districts and with a K-4-4-4 pattern in mind recommend where the school centers might be located.

June 21, 1976, a regular Collins Board meeting was held. The superintendent informed the board that the DPI team would be here on June 22, 1976, to do the facility study requested by the Collins and Maxwell School Boards.

July 12, 1976, the researcher* informed the board that the DPI facilities study was received July 6 and he read the report to the board. The board decided to call a special meeting August 4 with the Maxwell Board to discuss the study.

August 4, 1976, a special meeting of the Collins and

*Now Superintendent of Collins Community School District.

Maxwell School Boards at Collins was held to discuss the DPI Facility Study and Recommendations. The school site recommendations were as follows: K-4 students to be housed at Maxwell, 5-8 students to be housed at Collins, and 9-12 students to be housed at Maxwell. The joint boards supported the recommendations of the DPI. The boards also decided to hire Dr. Walter Hetzel as their attorney at \$30.00 per hour to draw up the petition for reorganization. The boards would divide the cost of the attorney. There was also some discussion about the joint boards director district recommendations for the proposed district and if they were legal due to the one-man-one-vote law. The boards decided to get a legal opinion from Dr. Hetzel before they took any action. The board also decided that the DPI report should be released to the citizens of both communities via their respective schools' newsletters.

August 6, 1976, the Collins Newsletter informed the citizens of the DPI facilities study and recommendations. It was also stated that both boards supported the recommendations but if a reorganization vote passed, the new board had the right to change any or all of the recommendations made by the previous boards.

August 16, 1976, at a regular board meeting, the superintendent informed the board that Dr. Hetzel had requested a demographic study section by section, in both school districts in order to determine the director districts.

Compliance with the one-man-one-vote law was the reason for the request. The requested count in each section of the Collins District was conducted by the board secretary and the superintendent and sent to Dr. Hetzel.

September 1, 1976, a special board meeting was held at Maxwell to discuss and decide the name of the proposed school district and to revise the director districts according to the one-man-one-vote law. After much discussion, the boards decided that the name of the proposed district be the Collins-Maxwell Community School District. The boards also agreed to have five director districts as stated in Chapter 275.12, Section b. There would be two director districts within the existing boundaries of the Collins Community School District and three director districts within the existing boundaries of the Maxwell Community School District. According to populations, there would be approximately four hundred thirty-three people in each district. The decisions were to be forwarded to the school attorney so he could proceed with the petition.

September 16, 1976, the Collins Newsletter informed the citizens of the joint boards' decisions on the name of the proposed school district and the number of director districts and where they were located.

September 20, 1976, at a regular Collins Board meeting, the board was informed that the petition was ready to be circulated to acquire the 20 percent of the qualified

electors of the school district in order for the Area Education Agency 11 Board (AEA) to act on the petition. The Collins board decided to circulate the petition immediately.

October 5, 1976, the Collins Newsletter informed the citizens that the petition was being circulated and that by signing it they would signify their wishes to have the proposed merger come to a vote. The merger would come to vote only if the AEA 11 Board approved the petition.

October 18, 1976, at a regular board meeting at Collins, board members discovered that only a few more signatures were needed to complete the 20 percent needed on the petition and that Maxwell had not started circulating their petition.

October 29, 1976, the Collins Newsletter updated information about the Collins and Maxwell School Districts covering the following areas: name of proposed school district; number of directors and location of director districts; revised estimate of school capacities; actual 1976-1977 enrollments; 1976 school census; 1976 number of combined staff; transportation; grade organization and how many students in each school center; budget figure comparisons; and a list of advantages and disadvantages of a reorganization.

November 24, 1976, a special board meeting of the Collins and Maxwell Boards was held to discuss the petitions

and other merger decisions. Both school districts had acquired 20 percent of the signatures needed in order to petition the AEA 11 Board to take the merger to a vote of the people. The petitions were to be delivered to the AEA 11 Board that afternoon. The joint boards decided that the citizens' advisory committees were to be appointed by the respective superintendents by December 3, 1976, in the following areas: transportation, population and area, finance, building and equipment, and curriculum. The committees were to report their findings by January 5, 1977. The joint boards also decided to have an open house of both buildings on January 9, 1977, so the residents of both communities would have an opportunity to look at the facilities of the proposed merger district. Transportation to view the facilities would be provided by both districts.

December 20, 1976, at the Collins regular board meeting, the members learned that the AEA 11 administrator had set the date of January 3, 1977, 7:30 p.m. at Ankeny for the hearing of the merger petition. The board was also informed that 12:00 noon, January 3, 1977, was the deadline for filing objection to the petition and the objections had to be in the form of a written affidavit.

December 22, 1976, the Collins Newsletter informed the citizens that four citizens' committees were appointed to do studies in the areas of finance, curriculum, buildings and equipment, and area-population and transportation.

They were also informed as to the membership of each joint committee from both communities. The committees were to report to the joint boards on January 5, 1977. It was stated that the AEA 11 Board hearing was January 3, 1977, and that any citizen who wished to file an objection to the proposed merger had to do so by 12:00 noon that day and that it had to be in the form of a written affidavit. The open house tour of the Collins and Maxwell facilities would be January 9, 1977, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

January 3, 1977, the special board hearing of the AEA 11 was held for the purpose of hearing objections to the Collins-Maxwell merger and to accept or reject the Collins-Maxwell merger petition. There were two objections filed, one from the Colo Community School District stating that they thought they should have been part of the merger because their borders are contiguous with the Collins Community School District and that there were people they could serve better and who wanted to go to Colo. The second objection was from Hubert Clark, a resident of the Collins Community School District, who stated that his taxes would go up and that his children would have to ride the bus longer because the elementary center would be in Maxwell. Both objections were heard by the AEA 11 Board with several questions being asked by the AEA 11 Board members of the objecting petitioners. The AEA 11 Board President, Dr. Richard Lampshire, asked several times if there were any

other informal objections to the merger by the citizens in the hearing room. There were none expressed. The AEA 11 Board recessed for ten minutes and then returned to vote on the merger petition. All eight board members present voted yes to allow the merger to continue.

January 5, 1977, a special joint board meeting was held at which time the members learned that the AEA 11 Administrator had set the voting date for the merger on February 1, 1977. The respective chairmen of each citizen committee gave their reports on their specific areas. The joint board agreed that all the information presented by the committees should be compiled in a booklet and mailed to every citizen in both communities by way of their respective newsletters. The boards also decided there should be two more public information meetings, January 19, 1977, at Maxwell and January 26, 1977, at Collins. All board members were to attend both meetings to help answer questions about the committee reports and recommendations.

January 7, 1977, the Collins Newsletter informed the citizens that the merger vote was approved and the date for the merger vote was set for February 1, 1977. The committee reports were finished and would be mailed to every citizen in the school district the following week and that there would be two more public meetings. Citizens from both districts could attend either or both meetings. The open house tour of the Collins and Maxwell school facilities on

January 9, 1977, was also mentioned.

January 17, 1977, at a regular Collins board meeting, the members of the board were informed that the county auditor needed to know who was going to be the election workers, whether they would be paid or not, and what time they wanted the polls to be open. The Collins board agreed to have the polls open from 12:00 noon to 8:00 p.m. and decided to ask citizens to serve as election workers at no pay. The board gave several names to the board secretary and told her to call them and ask if they would work at the polls. The election polls for both communities would be their townhalls.

January 28, 1977 Collins Newsletter stated the following:

On February 1st, the voters of the Collins and Maxwell School Districts will go to the polls to decide the question of the merger of the two districts. At least 51% of the voters in each district must approve the merger before it will pass. If approval is given, the effective date of the merger will be July 1, 1977.

This will certainly be one of the most important decisions the people of this community will ever make. It is still one of the few decisions that the legislature has seen fit to leave to the wisdom of the local voters.

Please keep in mind that the sole purpose of our existence as a school is for the benefit of the students. Think with your head, not with your heart. Study the information that has been sent out and presented at the meetings, make your decision, and then VOTE on February 1, 1977. The polls at the townhall will be open from 12 noon to 8:00 p.m. that day. Each registered voter gets one vote on this issue. YOUR VOTE COUNTS.¹

¹Robert Rampulla, Collins Community School Newsletter, January 28, 1977, p. 8.

This review of the procedures used to initiate the process of reorganization does not give the sources needed to the reader who wishes to start a reorganization process. The following resources are found in the Appendix:

- A. Cover letter
- B. Questionnaire
- C. DPI outline of petition procedure
- D. Actual Collins-Maxwell petition

Chapter 4

PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

This chapter will present the results of the questionnaire that initiated this study and will also present the data collected relative to the possible reorganization of the Collins and Maxwell School Districts. Most of the data collected is a prerequisite mandated by law in order to effectuate a reorganization.

Ten questionnaires were mailed to the board members of the Collins and Maxwell School Districts. Ten of the questionnaires were returned for a 100 percent response. The response by the board members to the question whether a three-school study of Collins, Colo, and Maxwell School Districts should be done produced the following results: five members were opposed, three members were in favor, and two members were undecided. There was a majority of eight respondents who felt there was a need for the Collins and Maxwell School Districts to reorganize and to do so within the next two years. The other respondents were undecided. All ten respondents were in favor of continuing discussions on reorganization. Eight board members gave a positive response indicating that the students would be given a better education if reorganization occurred. There was one negative response and one board member was undecided. Five board members felt that a majority of citizens would favor

reorganization, one board member responded negatively, and three were undecided. A total of ten respondents reacted negatively to Iowa legislators mandating reorganization or to the Iowa Department of Public Instruction initiating reorganization. All ten respondents felt that the joint boards should be the initiators of reorganization. Eight respondents felt that citizens' study committees should be established in the near future and two respondents were undecided.

The majority of the Collins and Maxwell board members reacted favorably to all questions pertaining to the possibility of a Collins-Maxwell reorganization and therefore initiated this study.

The 1976 School Laws of Iowa stated there should be studies and surveys made of school districts before effectuating any reorganization.

...The area education agency boards may initiate detailed studies and surveys of the school districts within the area education agency and adjacent territory for the purpose of promoting reorganization of school districts in order to effect more economical operation and the attainment of higher standards of education in the schools.¹

The above mentioned law states the area education agency boards may do the studies necessary to effectuate a reorganization but does not specify that the studies are a

¹Larry Bartlett, ed., School Laws of Iowa (Des Moines: State of Iowa, Department of Public Instruction, 1976), Chapter 275.1, p. 241.

prerequisite to reorganization and that they are mandatory.

The provisions of section 275.1 to 275.5, relating to studies, surveys, hearings, and adoption of plans shall constitute a mandatory prerequisite to the effectuation of any proposal for district boundary change. It shall be the mandatory duty of the area education boards to dismiss the petition if the above provisions are not complied with fully.¹

The 1976 School Laws of Iowa also specified what specific studies and surveys should be done in Chapter 275.2.

The scope of such studies and surveys shall include the following matters in various districts in the county: The adequacy of the educational program, average daily attendance of pupils, property valuation, existing buildings and equipment, natural community areas, road conditions, transportation, economic factors, and such other matters that may bear on educational programs meeting minimum standards required by law.²

The above mentioned law was the criteria used to determine what data needed to be collected.

The following data relative to the reorganization of the Collins and Maxwell School Districts will reveal information pertaining to the areas of populations, enrollments, finance, curriculum, transportation, and school facilities.

AREA AND POPULATIONS

The Collins and Maxwell communities are located in the middle of a square including four urban areas as the

¹Bartlett, p. 242.

²Ibid., p. 241.

corners. Collins and Maxwell are six miles apart.

Collins to: Ames..... 24 miles northwest
Des Moines..... 29 miles southwest
Marshalltown..... 30 miles northeast
Newton..... 27 miles southeast

Maxwell to: Ames..... 18 miles northwest
Des Moines..... 26 miles southwest
Marshalltown..... 36 miles northeast¹
Newton..... 33 miles southeast¹

The Collins and Maxwell Community School Districts encompass the following counties: Story, Polk, Jasper, and Marshall. Only the Story County population will be referred to since the majority of both school districts is in that county.

As reflected in Table 1, Story County is growing; but according to the 1970 Iowa census, most of the growth is in the city of Ames.

Table 1
Story County General Population Table

	1950	1960	1970	1960-1970
Story County	43,692	49,327	62,092	+25.9

Source: Gayle C. Obrecht, "A Report on the Collins and Maxwell School Districts" (Des Moines, Iowa: Department of Public Instruction, November, 1970), p. 3.

Table 2 reveals that from 1947-1970 the farm population decreased 32.7 percent, the number of farms decreased

¹Cartech Incorporated, Iowa 1976-1977 Transportation Map, Iowa Department of Transportation, Quincy, Illinois, 1976.

36.9 percent, and the size of the farms increased 34.6 percent. There are some indications that these trends will continue into the future.

Table 2

Farm Population-Number of Farms-Size of Farms in
Story County

	1947	1970	Percent of Change
Farm Populations	8,000	5,386	-32.7
Number of Farms	2,125	1,343	-36.9
Size of Farms	166A	254A	+34.6

Source: Gayle C. Obrecht, "A Report on the Collins and Maxwell School Districts" (Des Moines, Iowa: Department of Public Instruction, November, 1970), p. 4.

ENROLLMENTS

The actual and projected enrollment data were taken from the micro-fiche-files of the Iowa Department of Public Instruction. Table 3 will give the enrollments for the Collins School from 1965 through the 1975 school year. This table shows a decrease of Collins students from 1965, from a high of 301 to a low of 208 students in 1975. This was a decrease of 93 students or a 30.98 percent decline in enrollment.

Table 3
Actual Collins Enrollments, 1965-1975

Year	K-6	7-9	10-12	Totals
1965	156	82	63	301
1966	138	82	69	289
1967	132	82	79	293
1968	121	72	82	275
1969	122	65	81	268
1970	115	61	81	257
1971	112	65	68	245
1972	103	68	62	233
1973	107	62	59	228
1974	94	51	55	200
1975	96	49	63	208

Table 4 gives the enrollment for the Maxwell Community School District from 1965 through 1975. This table shows a decrease of Maxwell students from a high in 1965 of 429 to 366 in 1975. This was a decrease of 63 students or 17.21 percent in enrollment.

Table 5 shows the projected enrollment for Collins School District from 1976-1980 school years and Table 6 shows the projected enrollment for the Maxwell School District from 1976 through the 1980 school year.

Table 4
Actual Maxwell Enrollments, 1965-1975

Year	K-6	7-9	10-12	Totals
1965	239	109	81	429
1966	217	114	83	414
1967	224	100	88	412
1968	228	92	88	408
1969	225	96	95	416
1970	205	94	93	392
1971	205	92	89	386
1972	190	94	82	366
1973	192	88	86	366
1974	176	93	88	357
1975	184	89	93	366

Table 5
Collins' Projected Enrollments, 1976-1980

Year	K-6	7-9	10-12	Totals
1976	90	45	60	195
1977	82	41	54	177
1978	81	49	46	176
1979	86	44	44	174
1980	82	58	39	179

Table 6
Maxwell's Projected Enrollments, 1976-1980

Year	K-6	7-9	10-12	Totals
1976	183	96	89	368
1977	182	85	99	366
1978	182	80	88	350
1979	193	63	99	355
1980	201	79	87	367

On projected enrollments, it is difficult to take all variables into consideration such as housing projects or manors built to house the elderly and the number of people with school age children moving in and out of the district. At this time, these projected enrollments appear to be accurate.

Table 7 illustrates the proposed school district enrollment through the years 1976-1980.

If the Collins and Maxwell School Districts merge in the 1976-1977 school year, approximately 563 students would be enrolled in the proposed school system. According to the 1975-1976 Iowa Educational Directory, there are approximately 136 school districts in the state of Iowa, the same size or smaller than the projected size of the combined school districts of Collins and Maxwell.

Table 7

Proposed School District of Collins and Maxwell
Projected Enrollments, 1976-1980

Year	K-6	7-9	10-12	Totals
1976	273	141	149	563
1977	264	126	153	543
1978	263	129	134	526
1979	279	107	143	529
1980	283	137	126	546

Table 7 shows that there would be a decline of enrollment in the proposed district from 563 to 546 in a five year period.

SCHOOL FINANCES

The financial resources of school districts have a profound influence on the educational programs and facilities they can support and maintain. The reader finds in Table 8 financial data describing the Collins and Maxwell School Districts for the 1975-1976 school year.

The Maxwell School District has an assessed valuation of \$34,346,246 and the Collins School District has an assessed valuation of \$28,878,976. The fact that the Maxwell School District is approximately ten square miles larger than the Collins School District may account for the difference.

The difference in assessed valuation per child is due to the enrollment factor. Collins had 208 students and Maxwell had 366 during the 1975-1976 school year. The Collins district's bonded indebtedness is zero because all buildings have been paid for while Maxwell's bonded indebtedness is the result of a bond issue passed to build a new elementary building with a new music and industrial arts complex added to the high school building. The financial data of the Collins and Maxwell School Districts were obtained from these districts' annual reports of May, 1975.

Table 8

1975-1976 Financial Data of the Collins and Maxwell
School Districts

School	District Assessed Valuation	Assessed Valuation per Child	Total Millage Levy	Bonded Indebtedness
Collins	\$28,878,976	\$130,085	38.001	none
Maxwell	\$34,346,246	\$ 92,329	40.241	\$715,000

Table 9 shows the financial data and the free bonding capacity for the proposed district. The free bonding capacity is the amount of dollars that the new district could generate for a bond issue.

Table 9
Financial Data for Proposed District

School	District Assessed Valuation	Assessed Valuation per Child	Bonded Indebtedness	Free Bonding Capacity
Proposed District	\$63,225,222	\$106,440	\$715,000	\$2,446,261

Hence, the proposed district would have an assessed valuation of \$63,225,222 and an assessed valuation per child of \$106,440. The free bonding capacity of \$2,446,261. These data were obtained from calculated formulas prescribed in the "Citizen's Advisory Committee Pamphlet."

CURRICULUM

One of the primary purposes for reorganization is to provide an educational program which gives the students a more comprehensive program than they had in their separate school districts. A review of the high school curriculum offerings was made of the Collins and Maxwell School Districts.

It should be noted that one national study suggested that minimum numbers of course offerings should be three times the number of units required for graduation.¹ Collins

¹W. D. McClurkin, Organization of School System in Georgia (Nashville, Tennessee: Division of Field Surveys and Field Services, George Peabody College for Teachers, 1965).

High School requires 16 units for graduation and Maxwell High School requires 17 units. According to the suggestion on course offerings, Collins should offer forty-eight units and Maxwell 51 units.

Collins Curriculum

Language Arts

English I
English II
English III
English IV

Mathematics

Algebra I
Algebra II
General Math
Plane Geometry
Trigonometry

Home Economics

Clothing I & II
General Home Ec.
Foods I & II
Family Living $\frac{1}{2}$

Science

Biology
Chemistry
General Science
Physics

Fine Arts

Art I $\frac{1}{4}$
Vocal Music $\frac{1}{4}$
Instrumental Music $\frac{1}{4}$

Social Sciences

American History
American Government $\frac{1}{2}$
Economics $\frac{1}{2}$
Sociology $\frac{1}{2}$
World History
Iowa Government $\frac{1}{2}$

Business Education

Business Math
Bookkeeping
Clerical Bookkeeping
Typing I
Adv. Typing & Office Practice

Industrial Arts

Auto Mechanics
Industrial Arts I

Foreign Language

Spanish I
Spanish II

Others

Drivers Education $\frac{1}{2}$
Physical Education $\frac{1}{4}$

Total--31 units

Maxwell Curriculum

Language Arts

Composition I
 Composition II
 Communications $\frac{1}{2}$
 Creative Writing $\frac{1}{2}$
 Journalism $\frac{1}{2}$
 Humanities $\frac{1}{2}$

Mathematics

Algebra I
 Algebra II
 General Math
 Geometry
 Trigonometry

Home Economics

Foods I & II
 Housing
 Child Development $\frac{1}{2}$
 General Home Ec.
 Family Living $\frac{1}{2}$
 Gourmet Chef

Science

Biology
 Chemistry I
 Earth Science
 Physiology
 Physics

Fine Arts

Art I $\frac{1}{2}$
 Art II $\frac{1}{2}$
 Art III $\frac{1}{2}$
 Art IV $\frac{1}{2}$
 Vocal Music $\frac{1}{2}$
 Instrumental Music

Social Sciences

American History
 American Government
 Civics $\frac{1}{2}$
 Economics $\frac{1}{2}$
 Sociology $\frac{1}{2}$
 World History

Business Education

Bookkeeping
 Business Math
 Office Practice
 Shorthand
 Typing I & II

Industrial Arts

Auto Mechanics
 Industrial Arts I
 Electronics $\frac{1}{2}$
 Metals $\frac{1}{2}$
 Mechanical Drawing $\frac{1}{2}$

Foreign Language

French I
 French II
 French III

Others

Driver Education $\frac{1}{2}$
 Physical Education $\frac{1}{2}$

Total--41 units

The above curriculum lists of courses shows that both schools emphasize academic courses and college preparation with little emphasis on career or vocational education. Neither Collins nor Maxwell schools meet the recommended standards that a school should have three times the required units for

graduation in order to have an adequate curriculum.

The citizen's curriculum report of January 5, 1977 states that if there were a successful merger vote between the Collins and Maxwell School Districts, more course offerings would be available to the high school students.

The course offerings suggested by the committee takes in $54\frac{1}{2}$ units or 76 different courses. At present, Maxwell offers 41 units and 56 different courses and Collins offers 31 units and 36 different courses. This recommendation means that students would be able to get a wider variety of courses in all fields. This increase in course offerings would necessitate utilization of the present Maxwell and Collins High School staffs with the possibility of a few staff reductions.¹

TRANSPORTATION

It would be a little premature to figure bus routes for a proposed school district until site locations for the high school, middle school, and elementary school are established. It would be safe to assume that the bus routes would primarily remain the same with a central transfer point at each center where there will be a shuttle bus system set up to bus the students from one center to the other center.

The proposed district would include approximately eleven square sections of land. The Collins School District

¹Dennis Miller, "The Collins and Maxwell Curriculum Committee Report," Report presented to the Collins and Maxwell Boards of Education, Collins, Iowa, January, 1977.

presently runs three bus routes and the Maxwell School District presently maintains four bus routes. Currently, the longest time spent on a bus route for students of either school is forty-five minutes and this could increase to about one hour for the students who have to be shuttled between centers. There is also the possibility that the residents living on the proposed district boundaries could petition out, in accordance with the Iowa Code (275.14), and this could possibly cut the amount of travel time for the students.

Table 10 shows what buses are available in the Collins School District during 1975-1976, indicating the year, make, passenger capacity, and their conditions.

Table 10
Collins Buses

Year	Make	Passenger Capacity	Condition
1974	Ford	54	Good
1973	Ford	54	Good
1972	Ford	54	Good
1968	Ford	54	Fair

The 1974, 1973 and 1972 Ford buses are in good condition and are utilized on regular routes, while the 1968 bus is used only as a reserve bus.

Table 11 illustrates the year, make, passenger capacity, and conditions of the buses used to transport students in the Maxwell School District.

Table 11
Maxwell Buses

Year	Make	Passenger Capacity	Condition
1975	International	60	Excellent
1973	International	60	Good
1972	Chevrolet	48	Good
1970	Chevrolet	48	Good
1968	Ford	54	Fair
1963	International	54	Fair

According to Tables 10 and 11, the Collins and Maxwell buses seem to be adequate and it is doubtful that any new buses would be needed in the near future.

SCHOOL FACILITIES

An evaluation of the existing facilities will not be included in this study. An evaluation of the facilities in Collins and Maxwell can be found in the Survey completed by Drake University dated June, 1968. Each school has a copy of this report. The only major change in either district has been the remodeling and updating of the home economic's

facility in Maxwell. In 1975, Maxwell passed a bond issue for \$715,000.00 for a new elementary building containing 9 classrooms, media center, principal's office, nurse's room, conference room, teacher's lounge, remedial reading room, storage rooms, and rest rooms. There will also be a new industrial arts room, and a vocal and instrumental music addition to the old building. The building project will be completed in the fall of 1977.

Chapter 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has been concerned with the feasibility of the Collins and Maxwell School Districts to reorganize in order to provide their students with a comprehensive educational program. The criteria established to ascertain feasibility were proposed around the following questions:

1. What effect will continued declining enrollments have on the educational programs in the schools?
2. What are the financial situations of both districts pertaining to assessed valuation, assessed valuation per child, total millage levy, bonded indebtedness, and free bonding capacity?
3. Are the students in the study provided a comprehensive educational program now and will they be able to in the near future relative to the expressed needs and interests of the students?
4. Would the reorganization of the two school districts offer the students a comprehensive education and provide for a more efficient educational system?

Specific areas included in the study were: (1) area and populations, (2) enrollments, (3) school finances, (4) educational programs, and (5) transportation.

SUMMARY

The Collins and Maxwell Community School Districts are predominantly located in Story County. They are adjacent to each other and are approximately six miles apart. Story County is growing according to the 1970 Iowa census

but this growth is primarily in the city of Ames. The farm populations in Story County have decreased 32.7 percent and the number of farms has also declined 36.9 percent from 1947 to 1970. All indications are that these trends will continue into the future.

The past and present enrollments of the Collins and Maxwell School Districts, based on figures obtained from the Iowa Department of Public Instruction's micro-fiche-files, indicate that they both have been declining. The Collins District has declined 30.89 percent from 1965 to 1975 and Maxwell has declined 17.21 percent over the same period. The projected enrollments of the Collins and Maxwell Community School Districts from 1976 through the 1981 school year shows Collins sharply decreasing and Maxwell slowly decreasing. By 1980, the Maxwell School District enrollment will be the same as in 1976. The enrollment for the proposed district shows that it would have a total of 553 school year indicates that the proposed district would decline by 17 students or 3.74 percent. All projected figures should be used very objectively and not as absolutes.

A summary of the financial data of the proposed district reveals the following: (1) the districts total assessed valuation is \$63,225,222, (2) their assessed valuation per child is \$106,440, (3) the bonded indebtedness is \$115,000, and (4) the free bonding capacity is \$2,446,261.

The curriculum of the Collins and Maxwell Community

School Districts are inadequate due to the lack of units of credits provided. Collins requires 16 units of credit for graduation and only offers 31 units of credit in their curriculum. Maxwell requires 17 units of credit for graduation and offers only 42 units of credit. Recommendations are that a school should offer three times the amount of units required for graduation.

Transportation could be easily worked out within the prescribed time limits stated by the School Rules of Iowa. The proposed district is approximately eleven by eleven square of one hundred twenty-one square miles.

The facility sites of the Collins and Maxwell School Districts are smaller than the recommended size.

CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions can be made from the literature reviewed and the data collected for this study:

1. The majority of the Collins and Maxwell school board members are in favor of a reorganization.
2. The population trends in the school district areas studied and decreasing enrollment figures show a steady decline. Not all variables can be anticipated, but there is no evidence that this trend will reverse itself.
3. The financial operation of the Collins and Maxwell School Districts is inevitably doomed because of declining enrollment, inflation, and higher teacher salaries

demande d by unified teacher organizations.

4. The Collins and Maxwell School Districts are not offering an adequate educational program to their high school students. Both schools should be offering more units of credits to their students in order to provide a comprehensive education. Their present programs are academically oriented with no regard for vocational interests of their students. Due to projected declining enrollments, the educational programs of both schools would seem to be in jeopardy of being reduced even further.

5. A merger of the Collins and Maxwell School Districts would create a substantial increase in the amount of units of credits the students could be offered, hence providing a more comprehensive education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations seem warranted:

1. Reorganization should be considered in the very near future by the two schools involved in this study.
2. Reorganization should not be promoted as a means of lowering taxes or cutting costs but as a means to improve instruction by increasing the educational opportunities available to the students.
3. A career and vocational education program should be initiated and implemented to provide a comprehensive education for all high school students.

4. Declining enrollment trends indicate that a larger area should be considered for reorganization in order to prevent the possibility of further reorganization in the next ten to fifteen years. Both school districts should give serious thought to the possibility of a three-school reorganization including the Collins, Colo, and Maxwell Community School Districts.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

COVER LETTER

March 4, 1976

Dear School Board Member:

I am presently doing a graduate project at Drake University to fulfill my requirements for graduation. The graduate project which I have selected to do is a feasibility study of the possible reorganization of the Collins Community School District with the Maxwell Community School District.

Enclosed you will find a questionnaire pertaining to the possibility of reorganization between the Collins and Maxwell School Districts. Please fill in your individual responses to the questions according to your personal feelings. Your individual responses to the questions will be kept confidential, but a total composite of all responses will be totaled in order to make an evaluation of your feelings about the possibility of the reorganization of the Collins and Maxwell School Districts.

A stamped self-addressed envelope is provided for your convenience.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Robert B. Rampulla
Principal
Collins High School

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE

Please X the answer that corresponds to your feeling.

Yes	No	Undecided	
			1. Should there be a study made pertaining to the possibility of a three school merger (Collins, Maxwell, Colo)?
			2. Do you think there is a need for reorganization between the Collins and Maxwell Community School Districts?
			3. Do you think there is a need for reorganization between the Collins and Maxwell Community School Districts within the next two years?
			4. Should the Collins and Maxwell School Boards meet to discuss the possibility of reorganization in the near future?
			5. Do you think that the reorganization of the Collins and Maxwell School Districts will benefit the students possibility of a better education?
			6. Do you think that the majority of the Collins and Maxwell School District residents would be in favor of reorganization in the near future?
			7. Should a citizens study committee from both Collins and Maxwell School Districts be established in the near future?
			8. Should reorganization be mandated by legislation?
			9. Should the Department of Public Instruction be the initiator of reorganization for small school districts?
			10. Do you think all discussion about school reorganization should be discontinued?

APPENDIX C

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION OUTLINE OF
PETITION PROCEDURE

2100-C29011-3/76

State of Iowa
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
Administration and Finance Division
Grimes State Office Building
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

Guide Outline for Initiation
Of A School District Restructure Under
Chapter 275 Code of Iowa
As Amended by 66th General Assembly, 1975

The only procedure for merging two or more local districts into a newly created community school district is by the petition process found in Chapter 275, Code of Iowa.

Before a petition is considered, the school districts and citizens involved should be active participants in the evaluation of their local district and the area being considered for a potential district.

Citizens' committees should consider the adequacy of educational programs, school population, existing buildings and equipment, natural community areas, road conditions, transportation and economic factors. One reference on the development of these committees is found in a Department of Public Instruction publication "Guidelines for Citizens School Advisory Committee" published in 1973, revised in 1976.

I. Petition Section 275.12

- A. The petition requires legal description of the proposed district. A lawyer should be engaged to draft the legal petition and advise on legal steps to complete the petitioning process.
- B. The petition must be signed by 20 percent of eligible voters in each district involved or 400 voters, whichever number is smaller.
- C. The petition should state the number of directors and method of election.
- D. An affidavit must accompany the petition showing the number of qualified electors living in each affected district. Section 275.33

- E. The petition and affidavit must be filed with the Area Education Agency administrator in which the greatest number of electors reside. Section 275.12.1

II. Hearing Section 275.14

- A. Within ten days after the petition has been filed, the Area Education Agency administrator shall fix the final date for filing objections and give notice of hearing. Section 275.14
 - 1. The Area Education Agency board may hear evidence and arguments and review matter of its merit. Section 275.15
 - 2. If two or more Area Education Agencies are involved in the hearing, the total A.E.A. board members act as a single hearing and voting agent.
 - 3. Within five days of the hearing the board shall rule on objections.
 - 4. If the petition is approved, the A.E.A. administrator shall publish their decision within twenty days. The decision is appealable to the district court. Section 275.16. If the hearing is conducted by a joint A.E.A. board of directors, the decision is appealable to the State Department of Public Instruction.

III. Election Section 275.18

- A. A special election is called by the A.E.A. administrator. Section 275.18
- B. The county commissioner of election which has greatest assessed valuation conducts election. Section 275.18
 - 1. A separate vote is held in each affected district. Section 275.20
 - 2. The proposition must be carried by a simple majority in each district. If four or more districts are involved in the proposition, three-fourths of districts must approve the proposition, and the overall vote must be a simple majority. Section 275.20
 - 3. The effective date of change is July 1 following the election of the new board of education. Section 275.24

IV. Board Election Section 275.25

- A. The election of the board of directors for the new district is called by A.E.A. administrator and conducted by county commissioner. Section 275.25

- B. The new board shall be organized within fifteen days following the election. This board has control of the employment of all school personnel for the new district. Section 275.25
- V. Assets and Liabilities Section 275.28
 - A. The division of assets and liabilities may be included in the petition, or in a meeting of the affected boards of directors called by the A.E.A. administrator. Section 275.28-29
- VI. The proposed districts may extend over existing merged area lines. Section 280A.25.3
- VII. A restructured school district under Chapter 275 cannot file a petition for enlargement under Chapter 275 for five years unless approved by the State Board of Public Instruction. Chapter 79, Acts of the 66th General Assembly, 1975.

Commencing at the Northwest corner of Indian Creek Township, Story County, Iowa, the same being Township Eighty-two (82) North, Range Twenty-two (22) West of the 5th P.M., Story County, Iowa, thence East along the North line of said Township to the Northeast corner of said Township and continuing East along the North lines of Sections Six (6) and Five (5), Township Eighty-two (82) North, Range Twenty-one (21) West of the 5th P.M., Story County, Iowa to the Southeast corner of Section Thirty-two (32) of Township Eighty-three (83)

North, Range Twenty-one (21) West of the 5th P.M., Story County, Iowa; thence North to the East Quarter corner of said Section Thirty-two (32); thence West to the center of said Section Thirty-two (32); thence North one hundred ten (110) rods; thence East to the East boundary line of said Section Thirty-two (32); thence North to the Northwest corner of Section Thirty-three (33) of said Township; thence East along the North lines of Sections Thirty-three (33), Thirty-four (34), and Thirty-five (35) of said Township to the Northeast corner of the West one-half of the Northwest Quarter ($W\frac{1}{2} NW\frac{1}{4}$) of said Section Thirty-five (35); thence South to the Southeast corner of the last mentioned tract; thence East along the center lines of Sections Thirty-five (35) and Thirty-six (36) of said Township to the center of said Section Thirty-six (36); thence South to the Northwest corner of the Southwest Quarter of the Southeast Quarter ($SW\frac{1}{4} SE\frac{1}{4}$) of the said Section Thirty-six (36); thence East of the Northeast corner of the last mentioned tract; thence South to the Southeast corner of the last mentioned tract; thence West along the North line of Section One (1), Township Eighty-two (82) North, Range Twenty-one (21) West of the 5th P.M., Story County, Iowa, to the North Quarter corner of said Section 1; thence South on the center lines of Sections One (1) and Twelve (12) of said Township to the center of said Section Twelve (12); thence East along the center line of said Section to the East Quarter corner of said Section; thence South along the East lines of Sections Twelve (12) and Thirteen (13) of said Township to the Southwest corner of the Northwest Quarter of the Northwest Quarter ($NW\frac{1}{4} NW\frac{1}{4}$) of Section Eighteen (18) of Township Eighty-two (82) North, Range Twenty (20) West of the 5th P.M., Marshall County, Iowa; thence East along the South line of the last mentioned tract to the Northeast corner of the Southeast Quarter of the Northwest Quarter ($SE\frac{1}{4} NW\frac{1}{4}$) of Section Eighteen (18) of said Township; thence South along the center line of said Section Eighteen (18) to the North Quarter corner of Section Nineteen (19) of said township; thence East along the North line of said Section to the Northeast corner of the West one-half of the East one-half of said Section Nineteen (19); thence South along the East line of the West one-half of the East one-half ($W\frac{1}{2} E\frac{1}{2}$) of Sections Nineteen (19), Thirty (30), and Thirty-one (31) of said Township to the Southeast corner of the Northwest Quarter of the Southeast Quarter ($NW\frac{1}{4} SE\frac{1}{4}$) of Section Thirty-one (31) of said Township; thence West to the Southwest corner of the Northwest Quarter of the Southwest Quarter ($NW\frac{1}{4} SW\frac{1}{4}$) of said Section Thirty-one (31), a point on the Marshall County line; thence South along the county line to the Southeast corner of Section Thirty-six (36), Township Eighty-two (82) North, Range Twenty-one (21) West of the 5th P.M., Story County, Iowa; thence West along the South line of said Section Thirty-six (36) to the Northeast corner of Section Two (2) of Township Eighty-one (81) North, Range Twenty-one (21), West of the 5th P.M., Jasper County, Iowa; thence South along the Section line to the center of Highway 64 at a point where said highway intersects the East line of said Section Two (2); thence in a Southwesterly direction down the center line of Highway 64 to the point where said highway intersects the South line of said Section Two (2); thence West to the Northeast corner of the West one-half of the Northwest Quarter ($W\frac{1}{2} NW\frac{1}{4}$) of Section Eleven (11), Township Eighty-one (81) North, Range Twenty-one (21), West of the 5th P.M., Jasper County, Iowa; thence South to the Southeast corner of the last mentioned tract; thence West to the East Quarter corner of Section Ten (10) of said Township; thence South along the East lines of Sections Ten (10) and Fifteen (15) of said Township to a point Forty (40) rods South of the East Quarter corner of said Section Fifteen (15); thence West Eighty (80) rods to the North-south center line of the Southeast Quarter ($SE\frac{1}{4}$) of said Section Fifteen (15); thence South Forty (40) rods to the Southeast corner of the Northwest Quarter of the Southeast Quarter ($NW\frac{1}{4} SE\frac{1}{4}$) of said Section Fifteen (15); thence West to the Southwest corner of the North one-half ($N\frac{1}{2}$) of the Southwest Quarter ($SW\frac{1}{4}$) of said Section Fifteen (15); thence South to the Southeast corner of Section Sixteen (16) of said Township; thence West along the South line of Section Sixteen (16) to the Southwest corner of said Section Sixteen (16); thence North along the West line of Section Sixteen (16) to the Northwest corner of said Section Sixteen (16); thence West along the South lines of Sections Eight (8) and Seven (7) of said Township to the Southwest corner of said Section Seven (7) and continuing West along the South lines of Sections Twelve (12) and Eleven (11) of Township Eighty-one (81) North, Range Twenty-two (22), West of the 5th P.M., Polk County, Iowa,

to the Southwest corner of the Southeast Quarter (SE $\frac{1}{4}$) of the Southeast Quarter (SE $\frac{1}{4}$) of Section Eleven (11) of said Township; thence North to the Northwest corner of the last mentioned tract; thence West to the Northeast corner of the Southwest Quarter (SW $\frac{1}{4}$) of the Southwest Quarter (SW $\frac{1}{4}$) of said Section Eleven (11); thence South to the Southeast corner of the last mentioned tract; thence West to the Northeast corner of Section Seventeen (17) of said Township; thence South to the Southeast corner of Section Twenty (20) of said Township; thence West to the Southwest corner of Section Nineteen (19) of said Township; thence South to the Southeast corner of the Northeast Quarter (NE $\frac{1}{4}$) of Section Twenty-five (25) of Township Eighty-one (81) North, Range Twenty-three (23) West of the 5th P.M., Polk County, Iowa; thence West to the Southwest corner of the Northeast Quarter (NE $\frac{1}{4}$) of said Section Twenty-five (25); thence North to the Southeast corner of the Northwest Quarter (NW $\frac{1}{4}$) of Section Twenty-four (24) of said Township; thence west to the Southwest corner of the last mentioned tract; thence North to the Northwest corner of the last mentioned tract; thence West to the point where the East bank of the Skunk River Ditch as now located and established across Section Fourteen (14) in said Township intersects the South line of said Section Fourteen (14); thence Northwesterly along the East bank of the Skunk River Ditch to the point where said Bank intersects the North line of the South one-half (S $\frac{1}{2}$) of said Section Fourteen (14); thence East to the Northeast corner of the Southeast Quarter (SE $\frac{1}{4}$) of Section Fourteen (14); thence North to the Northwest corner of Section One (1) of said Township; thence West along the Polk and Story County line to the Southwest corner of the East one-half (E $\frac{1}{2}$) of Section Thirty-five (35) of Township Eighty-two (82) North, Range Twenty-three (23) West of the 5th P.M., Story County, Iowa; thence North to the Northwest corner of the Northeast Quarter (NE $\frac{1}{4}$) of Section Twenty-six (26) of said Township; thence East to the Northeast corner of the last mentioned tract; thence North to the Northwest corner of Section Thirteen (13); thence East to the Northeast corner of the last mentioned tract; thence North to the place of beginning.

We further request there be five directors in the above proposed district; and that the entire district be divided, on the basis of population, into five designated single member director districts in compliance with Section 275.12, subsection two (2) paragraph b, Code of Iowa 1975 as amended by session one (1) Sixty-Sixth (66th) General Assembly, with each director district to be represented on the board of directors by one director who shall be a resident of such director district and who shall be elected by the vote of the electors of the entire school district; the boundaries of such director districts are to be as follows:

FIRST DIRECTOR DISTRICT: That part of the proposed Collins-Maxwell Community School District bounded on the East by a line commencing at the Northeast corner of Section Four (4) of Township Eighty-two (82) North, Range Twenty-two (22) West of the 5th P.M., Story County, Iowa; thence South along the East lines of Sections Four (4), Nine (9), Sixteen (16) and Twenty-one (21) of said Township to the Northwest corner of the corporate limits of the City of Maxwell in said Township; thence East along the North corporate line to the center of Baldwin Street; thence South along the center line of Baldwin Street to the Southern boundary of the corporate limits of the City of Maxwell; thence West along the corporation line to the Southwest corner of Maxwell located on the East boundary line of Section Twenty-eight (28) of said Township; thence South along the East boundary lines of Sections Twenty-eight (28), and Thirty-three (33) of said Township and Sections Four (4) and Nine (9) of Township Eighty-one (81) North, Range Twenty-two (22) West of the 5th P.M., Polk County, Iowa, to the Southern boundary of said proposed district at the Southeast corner of said Section Nine (9), and whose South boundary and West boundary and North boundary are the boundaries of the proposed Collins-Maxwell Community School District to the South, West and North of and between the point of beginning and point of ending of the above described East line.

APPENDIX E

TABULATION OF QUESTIONNAIRE

Please X the answer that corresponds to your feeling.

Yes	No	Undecided	
3	5	2	1. Should there be a study made pertaining to the possibility of a three school merger (Collins, Colo, Maxwell)?
8	1	1	2. Do you think there is a need for reorganization between the Collins and Maxwell Community School Districts?
8		2	3. Do you think there is a need for reorganization between the Collins and Maxwell Community School Districts within the next two years?
10			4. Should the Collins and Maxwell school boards meet to discuss the possibility of reorganization in the near future?
8	1	1	5. Do you think that the reorganization of the Collins and Maxwell School Districts will benefit the students possibility of a better education?
5	2	3	6. Do you think that the majority of the Collins and Maxwell School District residents would be in favor of reorganization in the near future?
8		2	7. Should a citizens study committee from Collins and Maxwell School Districts be established in the near future?
	10		8. Should reorganization be mandated by legislation?
	10		9. Should the Department of Public Instruction be the initiator of reorganization for small school districts?
	10		10. Do you think all discussion about school reorganization should be discontinued?